

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 HA-05 TRSE-00 /078 W
-----039736 131130Z /12

O 131046Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1381
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 3331

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY
BRUSSELS FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE
FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: THE FIRST WEEK

1. SUMMARY: BASED ON OUR FIRST WEEK IN SALISBURY, WE CAN REPORT A LITTLE, BUT NOT MUCH, PROGRESS TOWARDS AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING (APM) AFTER MANY IMPRESSIONS AND MANY CONTACTS WITH VARIOUS SECTORS OF SOCIETY. AS FOLLOWING TEL WILL REPORT, WE HAD SOME SUCCESS WITH ENGAGING OFFICIALS OF THE REGIME IN A DISCUSSION OF THE MODALITIES OF A CONFERENCE. THE PRINCIPALS, HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY ON THE AFRICAN SIDE, HAVE SO FAR GIVEN NO INDICATION OF AN INCLINATION TO

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MODIFY THEIR OPPOSITION TO A MEETING. THERE IS WHITE SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA OF NKOMO'S RETURN, BUT LITTLE APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO MAKE THE NECESSARY COMPROMISES. PRESSURES WILL HAVE TO BUILD BEFORE AN APM WILL BE ACCEPTED. THEY MAY COME FROM THE SMITH GROUP UNWILLING TO LEAVE POWER WITHOUT RESOLVING THE WAR AND FROM MUZOREWA'S FEAR OF LOSS OF POLITICAL

SUPPORT FROM INCREASING IDENTIFICATION WITH THE SECURITY FORCES. END SUMMARY

2. WE ARE SCHEDULED TO MEET WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14 WITH THE DEPUTIES TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WHO, IF ANYTHING, ARE MORE OPPOSED TO A MEETING THAN THEIR SUPERIORS. WE WILL AT THAT TIME REVIEW THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF AN APM. WE WILL MAKE OUR APPROACH LOW KEY ARGUING ALSO FOR THE CONTINUATION OF CONTACTS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION AND EFFECTIVELY ASSESS THE DEVELOPING SITUATION IN RHODESIA. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT, UNLESS WE GIVE OTHER REASONS FOR BEING HERE BEYOND PRESSING FOR AN APM, AFRICAN POLITICANS MAY FORCE THE REGIME TO RESIST ALLOWING US TO RETURN. SO FAR, THERE HAS BEEN NO MENTION TO US OF SITHOLE'S REPORTED PROPOSAL TO INVITE THE BRITISH TO TAKE PART IN THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT -- EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, ELECTIONS, ETC. (PRETORIA 3190). GAYLARD PROBED US ON THE SUBJECT OF ELECTION OBSERVERS AND WE REPLIED NEGATIVELY (PRETORIA 3322). IF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL DEPUTIES BRING IT UP WEDNESDAY, WE WILL REPLY SIMILARLY ALONG THE LINES OF OWEN'S ANSWER TO THE QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT.

3. WE HAVE RECEIVED MIXED SIGNALS ON THE PROGRESS OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. ON THE ONE HAND, IT IS BEING HEAVILY CRITICIZED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION

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AND IN THE PRESS. THE INITIAL EXHILARATION AT HAVING ACHIEVED ONE-MAN ONE-VOTE AND AN INDEPENDENCE DATE HAS WORN OFF AFTER THREE MONTHS. THE COMPLAINT IS THAT NOTHING FURTHER HAS BEEN DONE AND THE WAR IS CONTINUING OR PERHAPS INCREASING IN IT'S LEVEL OF VIOLENCE. STORIES OF KILLINGS ON BOTH SIDES ENTER INTO MOST CONVERSATIONS. UMTALI AND BULAWAYO REPORT GROWING TENSION AND CONTINUING ECONOMIC DECLINE.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE HEARD CREDIBLE EVIDENCE THAT IN SOME AREAS THERE HAS BEEN A NOTICEABLE DECREASE IN VIOLENCE. FIRST-HAND REPORTS FROM FARMERS INDICATE SOME OF THEM HAVE MADE CONTACT WITH GUERRILLAS AND ARE FEEDING THEM IN RETURN FOR BEING LEFT ALONE. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS NOT UNIVERSALLY BLEAK -- FOREIGN EXCHANGE IS STILL AVAILABLE FOR NECESSITIES AND THE LARGE TOBACCO CROP, WE UNDERSTAND, IS SELLING AT ITS HIGHEST PRICES IN MANY YEARS. FINALLY, THE PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS AGREEMENT ON AN ELECTION PROCEDURE AND PROMISE OF ENDING SOME DISCRIMINATION PROVIDE STRAWS AT WHICH THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT SUPPORTERS ARE EAGERLY

GRASPING.

5. THERE IS A MAJOR EFFORT GOING INTO DE-ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE AND CEASEFIRE. COOPERATION GROWS BETWEEN THE SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE POLICE, SPECIAL BRANCH AND SECURITY FORCES. LARGE SUMS OF MONEY, CLOTHING, FOOD, ARE BEING DEVOTED TO MAKING CONTACT WITH GUERRILLA LEADERS IN THE SHONA PART OF THE COUNTRY. SOME SUCCESS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED AND A NUMBER OF FAILURES. SOME GROUPS AT THE SECTION LEVEL (10 MEN) HAVE "COME OVER" AND ARE BEING USED TO ATTRACT OR FIGHT OTHERS, BUT SOME EMISSARIES, ON RETURNING FROM CONTACTS WITH UANC OR ZANU SITHOLE, WERE PROMPTLY KILLED BY ZANLA FORCES. THE PROCESS IS CONFIDENTIAL

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LIKELY TO BE A SLOW ONE. SECURITY OFFICERS ESTIMATE THAT REAL PROGRESS MAY NOT BE DEMONSTRABLE BEFORE OCTOBER. IN THE MEANTIME, LEVEL OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BOUGHT TO "COME OVER" AND LOYAL PF FORCES MAY WELL INCREASE. IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE, THEREFORE, THAT AN IMPRESSION OF DE-ESCALATING VIOLENCE CAN BE PROJECTED VERY SOON.

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY
BRUSSELS FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE
FROM LOW

6. ONE RECEIVES AN IMPRESSION OF RAPID SHIFT OF
FOCUS FROM CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE SMITH REGIME
AND THE NATIONALISTS TO THE GROWING GULF BETWEEN THE
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL NATIONALISTS. THE POSITIONS OF
THE WHITES IN MANY WAYS ARE BECOMING IRRELEVANT.
THUS, WHITE FARMERS CAN BUY SAFETY AS THE PF FOCUSES
ON ITS INTERNAL ENEMIES. THE OBVIOUSLY CHANGING
ATTITUDES OF WHITES AND THE ENDING OF DISCRIMINATION
HAVE LITTLE IMPACT ON THE WAR AND HOW TO END IT.
SMITH, HIMSELF, APPEARS TO HAVE LESS INFLUENCE
ON THE SITUATION AS EACH DAY GOES BY. THE DECISION
OF THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS TO STICK WITH THE SETTLEMENT
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AND HOLD SMITH TO IT IS NOT AFFECTED BY THE POSITION
OF THE WHITES. THEIR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE SECURITY
FORCES' EFFORT TO PRESS ON WITH THE WAR AND, SIMULTANEOUSLY,
THE CEASEFIRE EFFORT, INCREASES AS TIME GOES ON.

7. MOST WHITE GROUPS SEEM TO AGREE THAT NKOMO'S
PRESENCE IS VIRTUALLY INDISPENSABLE FOR A LASTING
SETTLEMENT TO BE ACHIEVED. THE NAIVE ARE PREPARED
TO FORGIVE HIM AND SAY HE SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT HE
CAN RETURN NOW. THE SECURITY FORCES ARE MAKING LITTLE
ATTEMPT WITH THEIR CEASEFIRE PROGRAM IN THE MATABELE
AREA OF THE COUNTRY. NO ONE YET SEEMS TO BE PREPARED
TO MAKE THE SACRIFICES THROUGH MODIFYING THE AGREEMENT
NECESSARY TO BRING NKOMO BACK. AS FOR MUGABE, THE WHITES
ARE CONVINCED OF HIS EXTREMISM AND THE SECURITY FORCES
ARE DEVOTING THEIR MAJOR EFFORT TO CUTTING INTO HIS
SUPPORT.

8. COMMENT: THERE WILL HAVE TO BE STRONGER POLITICAL
PRESSURES BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS
BEFORE THEY ARE LIKELY TO AGREE TO AN APM. THESE
CAN COME BOTH FROM AFRICAN POPULATION DISSATISFIED
WITH THE FAILURE OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT TO BRING
PEACE AS WELL, PERHAPS, FROM THE SMITH AND THE WHITE
MINISTERS. NUF LEADER, ALLAN SAVORY, IS BEGINNING
TO ATTACK SMITH AS A SELL-OUT WHO IS ABANDONING THE

WHITES IN RHODESIA TO PROLONGED WARFARE, IN HIS EFFORT
TO SAVE HIS OWN HIDE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE WHITE
LEADERSHIP OF THE REGIME IS YET CONVINCED THAT ITS
CEASEFIRE EFFECTS CAN NOT PROSPER. IF AND WHEN SUCH
TIME COMES, THEY MAY BE WILLING TO BRING ENOUGH PRESSURE
ON SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA TO AGREE TO A MEETING. THE
OTHER INFLUENCE ON THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS WHICH
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COULD LEAD THEM TO AGREE TO AN APM WOULD BE THEIR FEAR
THAT THEY WERE LOSING TOO MUCH POLITICAL SUPPORT BY
THEIR CONTINUED ASSOCIATION IN THE SETTLEMENT. THIS
IS LIKELY TO APPLY CHIEFLY TO MUZOREWA WHO STILL HAS
WIDE POPULAR SUPPORT. IT MAY COME FROM CONTINUED
LARGE-SCALE LOSS OF LIFE OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION
AT THE HANDS OF THE SECURITY FORCES AS OCCURRED
OVER THE LAST WEEKEND. IN ANY CASE, THESE TWO
TRENDS WILL REQUIRE MORE TIME TO DEVELOP. THEIR
PROGRESS SHOULD BE MORE APPARENT WHEN WE NEXT RETURN
TO SALISBURY ON JUNE 20.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SUMMARIES, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jun 1978
Decapton Date: 01 jan 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PRETOR03331
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780246-0775
Format: TEL
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780665/aaaacdvw.tel
Line Count: 249
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c250498a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2372639
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: THE FIRST WEEK
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, RH, (LOW, STEPHEN), (GRAHAM, JOH N)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c250498a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014